

## Stimulus Boosts Montana Transportation Projects



This site allows Montanans to follow the reinvesting and rebuilding of Montana with funding from the Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), signed by President Obama on February 17, 2009, is intended to provide a stimulus to the United States economy in the wake of the nation's economic downturn. The Act is expected to deliver a \$227.4

million shot in the arm to transportation projects in Montana, including \$211.8 million for highway and general transportation projects and \$15.6 million tagged specifically for transit. Of the \$15.6 million, MDT will receive 11.3 million and Billings, Great Falls and Missoula will receive direct funding from the Federal Transit Administration of 4.3 million. "MDT can deliver," said MDT Director Jim Lynch. "There is an urgent need in Montana and nationwide to address employment losses in the construction sector."

Funds from the Act are in addition to the more than \$300 million in transportation projects that MDT had already planned for 2009. Projects advanced under the Act require no state or local matching funds, which are typically called for by federal transportation programs. "MDT can put these funds to work in ways that will benefit Montana for years to come," said Lynch. "This initiative will produce thousands of jobs for Montanans and will help clear the pipeline of projects so we can focus on the challenges ahead." The additional funds are expected to generate roughly 6,300 jobs based on national estimates of employment



MDT Director Jim Lynch meets with Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and State DOT leaders to discuss economic recovery.

impacts. The Act requires half of the funds to be obligated within 120 days and the other half within a year. Such "shovel ready" rules point funds toward work that is already well along in the planning and project development process.

"The Act provides funding, but it does not allow short-cuts in established project approval processes. To be considered ready to go, in most cases, right-of-way acquisition, incidental construction, and detailed design work should also be complete or nearly complete," said Rail, Transit and Planning Division Administrator Lynn Zanto.

"The projects will include a wide spectrum of transportation improvements in every district of the state," said Zanto.

State and local transportation agencies across the nation have faced challenging conditions that have left many projects ready and waiting for funding. A substantial project backlog is attributable to:

- *Dramatic inflation in construction inputs.* According to national Producer Price Index data, the purchasing power of highway and street construction dollars fell by about 30 percent, between 2004 and 2008, nearly triple the rate of overall U.S. inflation.
- *Transportation needs outpacing revenue streams.* One federal commission estimated that through 2055, \$225 billion per year would be needed to thoroughly maintain and modernize the nation's transportation system, far more than the current capacity of the current federal highway trust fund.
- *Decline of total vehicle miles travelled and improved fuel efficiency.* These may be welcome trends, but they have negative consequences for state and federal fuel-tax revenues that are the dominant source of transportation funding.

Federal support for transportation is particularly critical to large, rural states like Montana, which generate far less revenue per penny of fuel tax than their more metropolitan peers. The Reason Foundation, in its 2008 Report on the Performance of State Highway Systems ranked Montana second among all states in overall performance and cost-effectiveness. "I'm proud of our accomplishments, but there is no goal line," said Lynch.

A list of Montana's candidate projects can be found at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/recovery>.



The new economic stimulus logo communicates meaning through the following symbols: gears representing infrastructure; a plant representing green technology; and a red cross representing health care. The flag-like stars give it a national identity. For more information about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, visit Recovery.gov.

# MDT Names New Planning Administrator



New Rail, Transit &  
Planning Administrator  
Lynn Zanto

MDT Director Jim Lynch has appointed Lynn Zanto as MDT's Transportation Planning Administrator. Zanto most recently was the supervisor of MDT's Statewide and Urban Planning Section. She replaces Sandy Straelh who retired on December 31.

A graduate of the University of Montana, Zanto also has a master's degree in Transportation Policy, Operations, and Logistics from George Mason University and is a graduate of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' National Transportation Leadership

Institute. She is also a member of the Transportation Research Board Committee on Statewide Multimodal Planning and Transportation Planning for Small and Medium Sized Communities.

In announcing the appointment, Lynch noted Zanto's extensive knowledge of federal and state funding and planning programs and her 16 years of experience working with the public and the many local, tribal, state, and federal officials involved in Montana transportation issues. "Lynn is uniquely qualified to manage MDT's nationally recognized planning efforts and help us address future challenges and opportunities. We're fortunate to have her on our team," Lynch added.

Lynn's phone number is 444-3445 and her e-mail address is [lzanto@mt.gov](mailto:lzanto@mt.gov).

## Montana's State Rail Plan Is Coming Soon

Be on the lookout for the draft 2009 Montana State Rail Plan available for public review and comment on MDT's Web site at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolv/railplan.shtml>. This publication updates the 2000 Rail Plan and provides current rail system information while also looking at recent state and federal rail planning requirements.

Major elements of the Rail Plan include:

- Montana rail competition
- Intermodal service
- State freight trends
- Coal transport
- Passenger rail service – Amtrak Empire Builder route
- Analysis of passenger rail along the southern route

*Note: MDT is working with Amtrak to complete this portion of the plan, and it will be posted as a separate document for public review when completed.*

- Lines at risk for abandonment
  - Grain facility consolidation impact analysis
- For additional information on the status of the Rail Plan update, contact Zia Kazimi at 444-7252. For the southern route passenger rail analysis, contact Janet Kenny at 444-7294.

## Apply Now for TSEP Grants

Since its inception in 1993, Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) construction grants have helped Montana counties replace about 120 county bridges. An additional 30 bridges are ready for construction pending approval from the 2009 Legislature. To date, 25 Montana county governments have taken advantage of this funding opportunity.

TSEP grants are also available to help counties prepare preliminary engineering reports. Since 2001, 40 TSEP grants have been awarded to counties for the preparation of bridge-related preliminary engineering reports.

Applications for the next round of preliminary engineering report grants will be accepted **after March 31, 2009**. These grant funds can be used for conducting studies, analyses, or research necessary for the preparation of a preliminary engineering report. The preliminary engineering grant can then serve as the basis for applying for a TSEP construction grant in late April or early May of 2010.

The preliminary engineering grant application process is noncompetitive and applications are generally processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

Review the TSEP Application Guidelines on the Department of Commerce Web site at <http://comdev.mt.gov>. Contact Richard Knatterud at [rknatterud@mt.gov](mailto:rknatterud@mt.gov) or at 841-2784 for more information.



## Transit Staff Steps Up Inspection of New Buses

MDT Transit staff inspects new buses going to rural general public transit providers to ensure the buses meet bid specifications and are in working order. MDT has stepped up these inspections by including the review of build orders. Bus vendors are required to rectify any issues before the bus is accepted.

MDT conducts these inspections to provide the best quality for local transit providers in Montana. For more information, contact Adam Kraft at [akraft@mt.gov](mailto:akraft@mt.gov) or 444-6120.



*At left, Adam Kraft inspects the wheelchair lift on a bus and at right, Tom Stubler and David Jacobs inspect the chassis and engine.*

## Research Corner

### Canadian Economic Development Impact Study is Underway

Recent economic developments in the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan are generating changes in commercial traffic at border crossings into Montana and along associated north-south highway corridors.

In response to these developments, area elected officials and other leaders are calling for expanded port services and have asked MDT and its provincial counterparts to improve highways on these corridors.

The Canadian Economic Development Impact Study will assess current highway conditions and consider the impact of increased traffic and need for highway improvements using scenarios for existing and expanded port services.

The scope of this study is limited to north-south highway corridors leading to the nine ports served by paved highways between and including the ports of Coutts-Sweet Grass and Regway-Raymond. These highways are Interstate 15; Secondary Highways 232, 233, 241, and 511; US Highway 191; and Montana Highways 24, 13 and 16.

The consulting firm HDR will conduct the study in two phases. Phase I will include an assessment of current and future economic conditions and an estimate of related commercial vehicle traffic growth with and without expanded port operations. Phase II, if warranted, would identify highway impacts of future traffic and necessary improvements along the corridors leading to the ports.

MDT Project Manager Craig Abernathy can be reached at [cabernathy@mt.gov](mailto:cabernathy@mt.gov) or 444-6269 for more information.

**MDT research programs serve to discover, develop, and extend knowledge needed to operate, maintain, and improve the state-wide multimodal transportation system.**

### CTEP Spotlight

MDT's Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is a federally funded program with many rules, regulations, and requirements. Samples of CTEP's Frequently Asked Questions follow:

#### Q: Who receives CTEP funding in Montana?

A: All 56 counties, 7 tribal governments, and all 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> class cities as defined by the Secretary of State are eligible to participate in CTEP. Yearly allotments are sub-allocated to the local and tribal governments based on population and to cities and counties depending on the amount of federal participation. Funds can accumulate for several years to undertake larger projects. Participation is not mandatory.

#### Q: Who can develop CTEP project proposals?

A: Anyone can develop project proposals, but project applications must be submitted by the city, county, or tribal governments whose CTEP funds will be used to develop and build the project.

#### Q: Is a public involvement process needed when choosing and prioritizing CTEP projects?

A: Yes. Minority groups, Indian reservations, special interest groups, and the general public must all be provided an opportunity to participate. This is generally accomplished by placing the proposed project on the city, county, and tribal commission/council agenda for public discussion.

#### Q: Is CTEP a grant program?

A: No. CTEP is a cost reimbursement program, i.e., the federal portion will not be paid until the work has been satisfactorily completed. Funds are allocated to an account for communities but will be held and administered by MDT. There is also a required 13.42 percent local match. In most cases, the local government will pay all the bills and MDT will reimburse the 87.58 percent of the project cost with federal CTEP funds.

#### Q: When is the local match required?

A: The local matching funds need to be available before work begins on the project (whether it is for preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, construction, etc.).

#### Q: Can other state funds be used to match CTEP funds?

A: That is at the discretion of the state agency that administers the funds. It's the local government's responsibility to check with the administering agency. MDT suggests local governments also obtain an opinion from their city or county attorney.

**CTEP is the Community Transportation Enhancement Program. For more information, contact Mike Wherley at [wherley@mt.gov](mailto:wherley@mt.gov) or 444-4221.**

### Essential Air Service Flights Return to Montana



That's right, the planes are back! Essential Air Service (EAS) made its return to central and eastern Montana almost a year after the last flight departed.

Great Lakes Airlines won the right to take over vacated routes and provide federally subsidized EAS service within Montana after Big Sky Airlines ceased all operations on March 8, 2008, after providing service to seven Montana cities since 1980.

The federal government provides discounted airfare through subsidies to participating airlines for routes that would not be profitable on their own. This support is vital to retaining commercial passenger service in the central and eastern portions of Montana.

Great Lakes changed the destination cities for some of their routes. Air service resumed to Lewistown, Miles City, and Sidney in the fall of 2008 with the introduction of two daily flights to Denver. On February 1, 2009, Havre, Glasgow, Sidney, Wolf Point, and Glendive all reacquired air service to Billings with one daily trip each to complement the existing routes to Denver. A second daily trip to Billings will begin on weekdays for Glasgow, Havre, and Wolf Point starting April 7, 2009.

The resumption of service brings the operational commercial airports in Montana back to the number formerly serviced by Big Sky Airlines. Great Lakes Airlines' federal contract ends January 31, 2011, at which time it will need to be reauthorized. For the next two years, the Big Sky state will be better connected in the sky. For more information, contact Great Lakes Airlines (307) 432-7000.

# Distracted Driving Can Be Dangerous and Deadly



**D**riving is an extremely complex task that requires cognitive and physical responses.

However, because many driving skills become automatic with experience,

some motorists feel comfortable engaging in distractions while driving. The cell phone has emerged as a particularly dangerous distraction, resulting in several states enacting laws to prohibit the use of cell phones while driving.

Cell phones are distracting at several levels:

- Physical (dialing or texting)
- Visual (taking eyes off the road)
- Auditory (hearing the phone ring)
- Cognitive (engaging in conversation)

A 2006 University of Utah study measured driving skills under three conditions: unimpaired, using a phone, and dosed with vodka to the legal limit. Findings concluded:

- The level of impairment caused by talking on the phone exceeded the impairment of a blood alcohol content of .08 percent (the legal limit in Montana).
- The odds of getting into a crash are four to five times higher if the driver is talking on a phone and eight times higher if the driver is texting.
- The driver's brain prioritizes a conversation over the task of driving.
- Using an electronic device is substantially more distracting than many typical distractions, such as turning up the heat, because it is more cognitively engaging, requires fine motor skills, and is performed over a longer time period.
- The study found no difference between the level of distraction caused by hands-free and handheld phone conversations.

These results confirmed earlier findings of two studies from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety that looked at the cell phone records of people brought to emergency rooms after traffic crashes. These studies found that talking on the phone increased the risk of an injury crash fourfold, with no significant difference in risk whether the phone was handheld or hands-free.

How do cell phone conversations differ from in-person conversations? Passengers in a vehicle, especially licensed drivers, tend to take an active role in supporting the driver and direct attention to the surrounding traffic when perceived necessary. For example, a passenger might mention an upcoming exit or point at the exit sign. There is no similar "shared situation awareness" with a remote conversation.

The *100-Car Naturalistic Driving Study* tracked the behavior of the drivers of 100 vehicles equipped with video and sensor devices for more than one year. During that time, the vehicles were driven nearly two million miles, involved in 82 crashes,

761 near crashes, and 8,295 critical incidents. Findings concluded:

- Driver inattention was the leading factor in most crashes and near-crashes.
- Wireless devices were the most frequent contributing factor for near-crashes.
- Nearly 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event.

More information from the 100-Car Study is available online at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

In Montana, inattentive driving is a major contributor to motor vehicle crashes; one in every three crashes involved some form of distraction or inattention. This number is increasing each year. The choice to use a cell phone, even hands-free, while driving increases the chance of a crash by 400-500 percent. The good news is that drivers can make sensible choices – including buckling up, driving sober, and limiting distractions. These choices will increase their chances of arriving safely at their destination.

For more information, contact Lorelle Demont at 444-7411 or [ldemont@mt.gov](mailto:ldemont@mt.gov).

Source: NHTSA's 100-Car Naturalistic Study

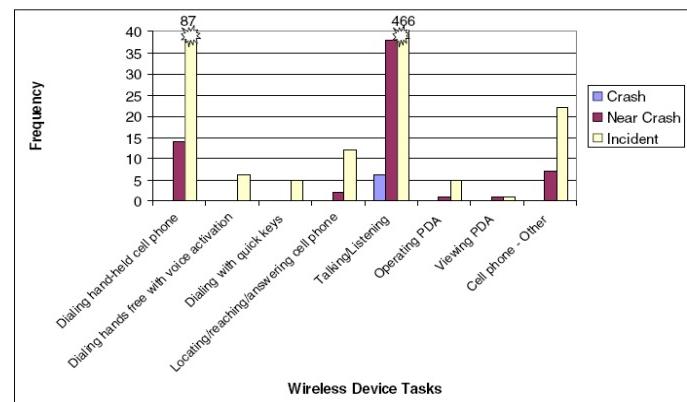


Figure 7. Frequency of occurrences in which the contributing factor was wireless device use by level of severity.

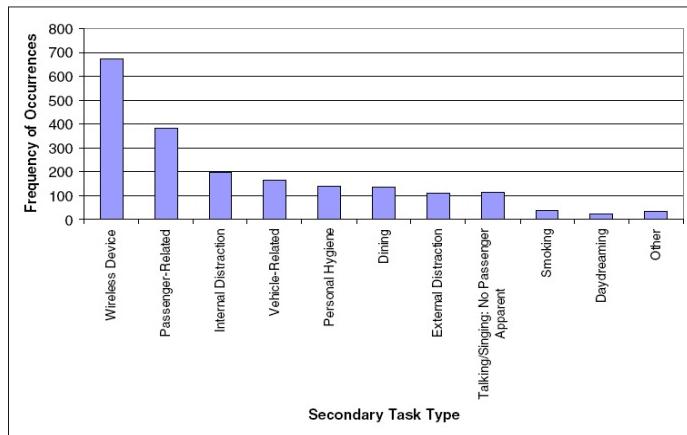


Figure 6. Frequency of occurrence of secondary tasks for crashes, near crashes and incidents.

# Become a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician

Learn about proper car seat safety for children and help Montana's littlest ones travel safely.



Reserve Deputy Feline Munoz inspects a child safety seat during a Child Passenger Safety event at the Fort Peck Reservation.

Do you like working with babies and children? Are you interested in safety? Looking for meaningful volunteer work? Become a certified child passenger safety technician and you can do all of the above!

The four-day training uses a nationally accepted curriculum. Classroom instruction is followed by hands-on opportunities to practice proper installation of child safety seats in vehicles. The training includes a community event where students demonstrate proper use and installation of child safety restraints and seatbelts, and then teach these skills to parents, grandparents, and others who transport children. Students must pass written tests and hands-on skills tests to become certified.

The course is available to those over 18 years of age. The initial registration fee is \$60 and the renewal of the certification is required every two years and costs \$40. A \$200 stipend may be available to Montana students traveling more than 50 miles each way to attend training.

The 2009 training schedule is being developed. Dates, locations, and instructions on how to register will be posted on [www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/occupant.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/occupant.shtml). Contact Pam Buckman at 444-0809 or [pbuckman@mt.gov](mailto:pbuckman@mt.gov) for more information.

## Apply for Highway Traffic Safety Funding

The State Highway Traffic Safety Bureau is accepting proposals for FFY 2010 (October 1, 2009–September 30, 2010) traffic safety funding. Please refer to [www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/grants.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/safety/grants.shtml) for more information, application materials, and instructions. The deadline for submissions is April 10, 2009.



## Tips For Driving Cell-Phone-free:

- Turn off your cell phone/Blackberry before you start driving.
- If you can't turn your phone off, let it ring.
- If you must use the cell phone, pull over when and where it is safe to do so.
- Let callers know you are a cell-phone-free driver and not available to make calls while driving. Put a message on your voicemail that says you are either driving or in a meeting and will call back as soon as possible.
- Avoid temptation; put your cell phone/Blackberry in your trunk.
- Do not attempt to make calls or send e-mails or text messages while you are at a stoplight as a majority of crashes occur at intersections.
- Establish regular times for callers to contact you and for you to return calls.
- Let someone else drive so that you can freely make or receive calls.
- If you are travelling with a passenger, allow him or her to operate the phone.
- Enjoy cell-phone-free driving; view it as downtime.
- Be a role model for young drivers and other drivers.

### BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR CELL-PHONE-FREE DRIVING!

Printed with permission from [www.cellphonefreedriving.ca](http://www.cellphonefreedriving.ca)

Click and Clack of the National Public Radio program "Car Talk" are giving away free bumper stickers in an effort to raise awareness about the dangers of using cell phones while driving. To get your free sticker, go to: [www.cartalk.com/content/features/Drive-Now](http://www.cartalk.com/content/features/Drive-Now).



**Battle of Rogers Pass** continued from page 7 kind of a consensus—which they were unable to accomplish. Consequently, the Governor and Commissioners decided to build the road in two sections - one from the summit of Rogers Pass westward toward Lincoln and the other from Lincoln eastward. The decision was not popular with either side.

The Highway Department had acquired all the necessary right-of-way for the project by January 1939, and the two Rogers Pass segments of the highway were awarded to a couple of Great Falls contractors in March 1939. They began work on the project the following month and had completed it by the end of the year.

Although the Great Falls interests won the battle, Helena obtained what it wanted as a consolation prize. In 1941, the Helena Chamber of Commerce successfully petitioned the commission for a feeder road from Helena via Canyon Creek over Stemple Pass to Lincoln (now Secondary 279). Debate even raged over this decision as some wanted the road over Flescher Pass instead. In the end, however, both communities and Montana benefitted from the decisions made by the Highway Commission in the 1930s as both Highway 200 and Secondary 279 remain important thoroughfares.

# Highways for Life: MacDonald Pass

MDT was awarded \$320,000 through the Highways for LIFE (HfL) program sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. The purpose of Highways for LIFE is to advance Longer-lasting highway infrastructure using Innovations to accomplish the Fast construction of Efficient and safe highways and bridges (thus the acronym LIFE). The three goals of HfL are to:

- improve safety during and after construction
- reduce congestion caused by construction
- improve the quality of the highway infrastructure.

Specifically, HfL is focused on accelerating the adoption of innovations in the highway community.

Montana's project involves retrofitting dilapidated, corrugated steel pipe (CSP) with culvert liners on US-12 atop MacDonald Pass in Powell County. The work will lengthen the useful life of the culverts by lining the existing culverts with High Density Polyethylene Pipe (HDPE) and Cure In-place Pipe liners rather than excavating and replacing them. Traditional culvert replacement requires closing half of the highway for four days. The plan reduces construction time by 70 percent. This practice minimizes the potential vehicle conflict between opposing traffic, work zone equipment, and safety personnel.

## High Density Polyethylene Pipe Liner (HDPE)



The pipe fuser aligns each end of the pipe on center for the hot-melt welding procedure. Note the device as shown by the red arrow. This trims the ends.



The liner is snaked beyond the ditch and down the slope. Due to the apparent flexibility of the HDPE, this process went smoothly.



The grout tube is duct taped to the HDPE, bent back on itself and inserted into the HDPE liner about three feet. This allows enough lead to be attached to the grout pump line.



Completed bulkhead. The grouted bulkhead is a barrier for the grout application. The tube will be pulled back as grout is pumped to fill the void between the HDPE liner and the existing CSP.

Specifically, this project involved the use of two different types of culvert lining. The first method involves inserting a smaller diameter HDPE pipe into the existing culvert then pumping grout between the existing CSP and HDPE to complete the procedure. The second method involves inserting a resin-impregnated polyester-felt liner in the existing culvert. The resin-impregnated liner is cured by injecting steam. The linings strengthen the culverts preventing possible catastrophic failure of corroded culverts and possibly prolonging the roadway surface life. The expected life of both culvert linings is in excess of 50 years.

Customer satisfaction survey results have shown the overall travelers' perception with respect to work zone delays to be positive during the course of the project.

For more information, contact Craig Abernathy at 444-6269 or at [cabernathy@mt.gov](mailto:cabernathy@mt.gov).

## Cure In-Place Pipe Liner (CIPP)



CSP inlet prior to insertion of CIPP liner. During insertion the installer angles the incoming liner toward the opening as best as can be managed. The liner under pressure follows the path of least resistance.



The liner exited the outlet end and released the air pressure that forced it through the culvert. Since it was inverted, it retained a natural plug until reaching the end. Now fully deflated, it is ready for curing.



The contractor performs an interior inspection with a tractor-mounted, remote-controlled closed circuit camera to insure proper placement of the CIPP.



Completed CIPP Fiber-meshed grout was used to seal the end treatments. Note that this type of culvert rehabilitation retains almost the full capacity of the original culvert.

# The Battle of Rogers Pass

by Jon Axline, MDT Historian

Montanans supported good roads in the 1930s, but sometimes politics got in the way of common sense. Like the railroads in the preceding century, a modern road could mean the difference between prosperity and economic stagnation. But during the dark days of the Great Depression, money was tight and the Montana State Highway Commission had to spread out its federal allocation to maximize the number of road miles built and the men employed building them. Outside of a few bridges, the Commission undertook few high-cost projects during the decade, instead using most of its federal funds to upgrade already existing roads. But, between 1936 and 1939, the Commissioners found themselves embroiled in a major and sometimes ugly debate between promoters in Great Falls and Helena about the proposed route of a road across the mountains between the tiny community of Stearns in Lewis and Clark County and Bonner in Missoula County. The combatants fought over the best mountain pass, the alignment of the road, and even which community was more deserving of the highway, Helena or Great Falls. Eventually the governor and state supreme court were dragged into it. The dispute brought out the best and the worst in many of the parties involved because the outcome could have serious ramifications for the losers during tough economic times.

Montana Highway 200 traverses Montana from the North Dakota state line near Sidney to the Idaho state line near Thompson Falls. By the early 1930s, only two sections of the road had yet to be built, including a 112-mile segment between Stearns and Bonner. Despite several studies, the Highway Commission and the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) had not decided on a route over the mountains for the highway. The sticking point was, which pass was best – either Cadotte Pass or the much steeper and still undeveloped Rogers Pass. The road over the former was already well used, but a road over Rogers Pass would require extensive roadwork.

The BPR's 1930 study of both the Cadotte and Rogers Pass routes concluded that the Cadotte route was best, but concluded that a "new road through very sparsely settled country for a limited amount of summer traffic, [cannot] be justified." The Highway Commission did not agree with this gloomy assessment and had just begun making plans for a road across Cadotte Pass when news of the project reached the public.

Once that information became widely known, the Helena and Great Falls Chambers of Commerce moved quickly to make their preferences known to the Commission. Great Falls preferred the more direct route over Rogers Pass, while the Helena Chamber wanted something a little closer to home. Neither group wanted Cadotte Pass. Helena pushed for a route that branched off from US Highway 91 north of Helena at Sieben, passed through the Sieben Canyon near Silver City and crossed the mountains over Stemple Pass to Lincoln. The Highway Commission still favored the Cadotte Pass alignment, while the BPR didn't think a road should be built. The battle was on. The opening salvo occurred in May 1936 when the *Helena Independent* published an editorial that stated, "Since the Highway Commission was organized . . . Helena has taken whatever the Commission desired to give us, but there is no record of Helena business interests getting together and demanding a highway to which we are entitled." The editorial alarmed the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce, which asked State Highway Engineer Don McKinnon to schedule the road for construction as quickly as possible before the Helena promoters could find some way to stop it.

Just before the project was scheduled to be let to contract in May 1937, delegations of businessmen from Helena and Great Falls appeared before the Highway Commission to discuss it.

The Helena Chamber openly opposed the Rogers Pass route, protested the letting of the contract scheduled for the following day, and threatened legal action if it did. The Great Falls delegation, on the other hand, asked the Commission to ignore the Helena group and pressed for letting of the contract as soon as possible. True to Helena's threat, District Court Judge George Padbury issued a restraining order the following day preventing the Commission from accepting bids for the project. The Commissioners vowed to fight the action, because it would set a bad precedent by impairing its mandate as stipulated by federal and state laws. To add to the chaos, groups representing communities along Montana 200 in eastern Montana presented a resolution to the Commissioners supporting the Rogers Pass route.

The Great Falls Chamber of Commerce did not stand idly by and issued a report to the Highway Commission on the project. Although it concentrated mostly on the social and economic benefits of the highway to the region, it also made several conclusions about the engineering aspects of the project that immediately made the report suspect in the minds of state engineers. They concluded that many of the statements in the report were "opinionated and not based upon proper information."

The following month, the Commission released its report on the project. Its study found that the Stemple Pass route proposed by Helena would cost a little over \$3 million to build, while the Rogers Pass route supported by Great Falls was 24 miles longer than the Stemple Pass road and would cost over half-a-million dollars more to build. Several weeks later, the Commission, with delegations from Helena and Great Falls present, selected the Rogers Pass route as the preferred alternative and announced that the contract would be let three months later.

Just before the contract was scheduled to be let in May 1938, however, the Helena Chamber of Commerce again appealed to the District Court to issue an injunction against the Commission preventing it from letting the project to contract. Although the Helena Chamber dropped the injunction the following month, logistical problems prevented the Commission from letting the contract for the first two segments of the road that summer. That problem also met with controversy as the Great Falls and Helena groups could not agree on which two segments should be constructed first.

Forty people from Helena, Great Falls, Lincoln and Broadwater and Jefferson counties attended the Commission's November 1938 meeting to discuss the project. Governor Roy Ayers was also in attendance. At the beginning of the meeting, the Commission told the delegation that it had selected the route and would not consider any more alternatives. Chairman Lloyd Hague told the Helena and Great Falls people they needed to arrive at some

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Rogers Pass Today

## **MDT Wants Your Comments**

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit [http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolv/docs/trans\\_comm/proposed\\_proj.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolv/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf), or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail your comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to [mdtnewprojects@mt.gov](mailto:mdtnewprojects@mt.gov).

MDT Project Analysis Chief  
PO Box 201001  
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## **Inside This Issue**

Stimulus Boosts Montana Transportation Work.....	1
MDT Names New Planning Administrator.....	2
Montana's State Rail Plan is Coming Soon.....	2
Apply Now for TSEP Grant Program.....	2
Transit Tales—Staff Steps Up Inspection of New Buses.....	2
Canadian Economic Development Impact Study is Underway .....	3
CTEP Spotlight - Frequently Asked Questions.....	3
Essential Air Service Flights Return to Montana .....	3
Distracted Driving Can Be Dangerous and Deadly.....	4
Become a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.....	5
Tips for Driving Cell Phone-free .....	5
Apply for Highway Traffic Safety Funding.....	5
Highways for Life: MacDonald Pass .....	6
The Battle of Rogers Pass.....	7

## **Contact Information**

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 406-444-7696 or 800-335-7592.

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